

Roosevelt Base, Main Gate 1
Ocean Boulevard where Nevada and Maryland Streets meet
Long Beach
Los Angeles
California

HABS No. CA-2663-K

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Western Region
Department of the Interior
San Francisco, California 94107

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

ROOSEVELT BASE, MAIN GATE 1

HABS No. CA-2663-K

Location: Ocean Boulevard where Nevada and Maryland Street meet, Naval Station Long Beach,
Long Beach, Los Angeles County, California.

USGS Long Beach Quadrangle (7.5'), Universal Transverse Mercator

Coordinates: 11.385030.3735700

Significance: The Roosevelt Base Historic District, constructed in 1940-1943, consists of 11 buildings designed in the International Style with Mediterranean Revival detailing, five structures, and extensive historic landscaping. It is eligible for the National Register for its site planning, landscaping, architectural style, and its Associate Architect Paul Williams, a nationally prominent Los Angeles Afro-American architect. Additionally, the District is significant for its association with the buildup of permanent Naval facilities on the Pacific Coast under President Franklin D. Roosevelt, during the mobilization period preceding the United States' entry into World War II.

This original gate is significant for its two dramatic concrete piers, topped with cylindrical lighting, that support seven panels of latticed iron gates. The gate is notable for its visual and functional design in connecting the original Gatehouse 40 and the Labor Board/Civilian Personnel Office 41 as well as marking the point of entry to Roosevelt Base. In spite of various changes over time, it retains its architectural integrity.

Description: The gate consists of two concrete entry piers supporting two metal double gates for vehicles and two single gates for pedestrians. The concrete piers are 7' 6" high, topped by bronze light standards 4' tall holding glass cylinders, 15" in diameter. Between the two concrete piers are two iron double gates 7' 6" high, constructed of 3/4" x 1" latticed bars in heavy metal frames. The pier on the west side has one latticed iron pedestrian gate connected to the northeast wall of Building 40. The pier on the east side has one latticed iron pedestrian gate and a latticed fixed panel connected to the northwest wall of building 41.

Alterations. Originally the Ocean Boulevard faces of the concrete piers were decorated with bronze letters spelling "U.S.N." These letters have been removed, although their "ghosts" remain in the peeling paint. The original fixed lattice panel connected to Building 40 was removed when the northeast side of that building was expanded. Main Gate 1 is no

longer operating. In 1982 this gate was closed because of increasing traffic, and a new entrance was created to the west on Navy Way.

Surroundings. Main Gate 1 is surrounded on the north by a wire chain link fence and Ocean Boulevard. To the south is the gate's driveway, a parking lot and Coffman Avenue. To the east is Building 41, set off by a grassy lawn and mature trees, and to the west is Building 40.

Historical Context: The construction of the Main Gate in 1941 was part of a plan to provide recreational and administrative facilities for the Pacific Fleet anchored in San Pedro harbor. The construction of this complex was part of a nationwide military effort to replace deteriorating World War I temporary buildings with new permanent facilities to attract and retain post-war peacetime forces. Rather than using a standard design from the Bureau of Yards and Docks, the Navy, through Allied Engineers, hired local civilian architects Adrian Wilson and Paul R. Williams. As a result the buildings, designed in the International Style with Mediterranean Revival details, are unique to the Base.

Construction of this complex, named Roosevelt Base, took place between 1940 and 1943, and cost \$18 million, funded by Congressional appropriations. Included were the gymnasium (23), squash/handball courts and locker rooms (22), a swimming pool (233) and tennis courts (221), arcade (234), lounge and bowling alley (20), officers' club (24), and fleet landing building (10), administration building (1), dispensary (2), fire station (3), central heating plant (4), labor board building (41), gatehouse (40), and main gates (gate 1), and a net pier (pier 7, structure 126), and extensive landscaping.

Although designed in 1940 as recreation facilities for personnel of the Pacific Fleet, the complex was not used initially for this purpose. In response to Japan's increasing belligerence toward China, President Roosevelt, (for whom the Base was named) ordered the fleet from San Pedro Bay to Pearl Harbor, Oahu, Hawaii to serve as a deterrence and warning. After the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor, the Base was rushed to completion; new temporary barracks were constructed, and the facilities were used during World War II as support for a Small Craft Training Center and as the administrative center of the Naval Operating Base in Long Beach.

After World War II the facilities, renamed Naval Station Long Beach, were used to support the U.S. Navy ships' personnel either homeported in Long Beach or in drydock for repairs at the adjacent Naval Shipyard. In 1991 the Naval Station was listed for closure as part of the national Base Re-Use and Closure activities as the Department of Defense downsized at the end of the Cold War. In 1994 the Base officially closed, although a number of buildings are still in use.

Sources:

A microfilm copy of an architectural drawing #1248-34-161, dated May 15, 1941, is located at Building 20, Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Construction Battalion Center, Port Hueneme, California.

Archiplan Urban Design Collaborative. 1987. *Terminal Island Long Beach Naval Complex, Long Beach, California: Update of Engineering Evaluation for Naval Station: Long Beach, California*. Revised April 1988, Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Long Beach Naval Station. Contract N624-86-C-5263.

Manley, William, Carson Anderson, and Susan M. Hector. 1994. *Historical and Architectural Assessment - Naval Station Long Beach, Long Beach, California*. San Diego, California. Contract Number N68711-92-M-4893.

Property Record Card: NAV. S. and A. Form 277

"Roosevelt Naval Base, Terminal Island: Headquarters of The Naval Operating Base, Terminal Island, Long Beach Harbor." 1944. *Architectural Record* May: 58-70.

Todd Erickson. Interview with Alexandra C. Cole, 29 March 1996, Naval Station Long Beach, Long Beach, California.

Project Information: This HABS documentation project was undertaken as a mitigative recording required by the Memorandum of Agreement, dated _____ 1996, signed by the City of Long Beach, the California State Preservation Officer and the Navy. The Navy proposes to transfer the Naval Station property to the City of Long Beach. The City, through the Port of Long Beach, plans to demolish all the buildings and structures on Roosevelt Base for a container terminal.

The documentation was prepared by Alexandra C. Cole, SAIC, Santa Barbara, architectural historian and Fermina B. Murray, historian, in May 1996. Large-format photography was done by William B. Dewey of Santa Barbara, California, in April 1996.